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ABSTRACT

The National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) database was used as a data source to examine school and nonschool factors related to the educational attainment of African American students. The 1,868 African American students who participated in the NELS First Follow-up were the focus of the study. Five predictors of mathematics and reading achievement were used in a multiple regression analysis. These variables were: parental involvement, religious socialization, self-concept, socioeconomic status (SES), and gender. About 70% of these students were classified as in the first and second quartiles on the SES scale, and nearly two-thirds lived in the South. SES and self-concept were found to be the strongest predictors of reading and mathematics achievement. Religious socialization was not found statistically significant for mathematics and reading achievement. Although parental involvement was found to be negatively related to mathematics and reading achievement, this result should be interpreted with caution since the magnitude of the relationship was very small. Results of this study also suggest that a different research design may be more suitable for examining variables related to African Americans and academic achievement. A small local sample may be more appropriate. (Contains 2 figures, 5 tables, and 33 references.) (SLD)

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Variables that Impact the Education of African American Students: Parental Involvement, Religious Socialization, Socioeconomic Status, Self-Concept, and Gender

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Abstract: The National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) database was used as a data source to examine school and nonschool factors related to educational attainment of African American students. Specifically, five predictors of mathematics and reading achievement were used in a multiple regression analysis. These variable ware parental involvement, religious socialization, self-concept, socioeconomic status, and gender. SES and self-concept were found to be the strongest predictors of reading and mathematics achievement.

Although the academic achievement of at-risk minority students has interested researchers, educators, and policymakers for some time, identifying students at risk of failure, is not a simple task (Peng & Lee, 1992). Many variables are involved, some of which are not readily measurable. One practical approach, however, is to identify students at risk on the basis of certain demographic characteristics that have been found negatively related to academic performance. These characteristics typically include, low family income, low parental education, single parent, limited English proficiency, the lack of supervision after school, having siblings who dropped out of high school, and communities with a poor economic condition and a high crime rate. Each characteristic represents a disadvantage that may place stress on students, and further, these characteristics are also relatively easy to measure and verify. (Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1990; Peng & Lee, 1992). Many of these empirical studies focused on academic *failure* and *weaknesses*. In contrast, this study investigated variables that are related to educational *attainment*.

Several theories including Irvine's Process Model for Black Student Achievement, Gary and Booker's Empowerment of African Americans, and the Comer Model suggest variables that promote the academic success of African American children in public schools, and provide the theoretical framework for this study by identifying variables that impact academic achievement. The models illustrate the significance of home, school, community, and culture in the educative process of African American students. Specifically, parental involvement, religious socialization, self-concept, socioeconomic status, and gender were considered as five predictors of mathematics and reading achievement among African American youth. The 1988 National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS): First Follow-up was used as the data source for the study. The NELS:88 is one of three important federally mandated longitudinal studies sponsored by the National Center of Education Statistics (NECS). Data from the studies are available on magnetic tapes from the NCES, they provide a large and nationally representative sample for secondary analysis.

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Irvine's Process Model for Black Student Achievement

Irvine (1991) developed a model to illustrate the process of achievement for African American students. It shows the severity of the problem of Black student achievement and attempts to explain significant factors that either contribute to or inhibit the school achievement of Black students. Two theories are grounded in this model--cultural synchronization (which takes the culture of the student into account) and negative teacher expectations (which often result in an unintended conflict between teachers and their students). In Step 1 of Irvine's process model (see Figure 1), prescriptive beliefs and prescriptive social structures are defined by society. Essentially, prescriptions are societal beliefs that are endorsed by the majority culture. These standards and goals are valued by society and serve as guides. As a Black student enters school the difference between the prescriptive and the descriptive becomes apparent. The descriptive level (Step 2) reveals school practices that contradict societal prescriptions and beliefs regarding education. Schools have common prescriptive goals: literacy, critical thinking skills, computational skills, responsibility, and citizenship. Irvine maintained, however, that the class and ethnicity of the children attending a given school may mediate the practices, policies, and structures of that school. For example, schools enrolling students from low socioeconomic homes generally have fewer financial resources, have fewer experienced teachers, use a system of rigid tracking, and discipline students more frequently. At the interpersonal level in Step 3 of Irvine's model, the roles of teacher and student are defined by the institution; that is, the particular school. Both overt and covert messages are communicated to students about their ability to succeed and their trustworthiness. Teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions, as well as their education and training, affect the enhancement of their role. The cultural synchronization component of the model (Step 4) addresses the interaction between teacher and student. Cultural synchronization has its roots in the concepts of Afrocentricity and the cultural distinctiveness of African American life. Afrocentricity is based on the concept associated with an African perspective or center in reference to one's culture and exhibited behaviors. It suggests that although American culture is traced to Europe, there are behaviors of African Americans that are explained better by examining retentions from African culture. A Black student whose culture is often discounted, misunderstood, or ignored is likely to experience cultural discontinuity in schools, especially in schools where the majority culture is Eurocentric. This results in a conflict because of what Irvine referred to as a lack of cultural correspondence or sync. This lack becomes more evident in instructional situations where teachers may misinterpret, denigrate, and dismiss Black students' language, nonverbal cues, physical movements, learning styles, and cognitive approaches. Many low-income African American students may have a different set of cultural characteristics from those of the teacher (Step 5). For these students, their race, class, and culture often act as the criteria by which they are evaluated, at least initially, by their teacher. The presence or absence of cultural synchronization influences the interaction of student and teacher expectations (Step 6), both as self-fulfilling prophecies and as sustaining expectation effects. These expectations increase or hinder Black student achievement (Step 7). The feedback loop in the model (Step 8) reflects the manner in which African American students' achievement or nonachievement reinforces the practices and policies that generated the original expectations. The relationship between Black students' cultural characteristics and their academic achievement suggests that some of the characteristics and behaviors of African American students may be in opposition to school goals. For example, students may resist school because they perceive education to have limited value in their lives. Irvine cautioned that models of African American student achievement should not ignore the fact that there are negative attitudes and behaviors that greatly deter academic achievement. These negative attributes are frequently cultural-specific; therefore, they should be addressed by educators in the context of the students' home and community. In summary, Irvine's model is indicative of societal and institutional constructs that can influence Black student achievement.

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Gary and Booker's Empowerment of African Americans to Achieve Academic Success

Gary and Booker (1992) presented a model that focused on factors that educators should be cognizant of if they are to successfully develop intervention strategies to help urban African American students achieve academic success. The model contains nine components: church involvement, family involvement, positive peer pressure, goal-setting, racial pride, culture utilization, mentor programs, academic motivation, and academic stamina. In general, Gary and Booker suggested that awareness of and involvement in community activities has a positive effect on youth. In particular, involvement with the church has been shown to increase academic achievement. Black youngsters who attend church regularly are more likely to get high grades, thereby ending up with rewarding careers. This factor supports the significance of one of the variables of interest in this study, religious socialization. Another component, support of the family, cannot be overemphasized. Standards of high achievement should be set by parents. Subsequently, they should maintain a sharp and consistent involvement in the educational and career development of their children. Positive peer pressure is a third component. Generally, youth peer groups have been considered as detrimental to the education and moral development of youth; however, under ideal circumstances peer group members can encourage one another to achieve academically. Various kinds of collective assignments, study groups, teams, and academic contests can be used to encourage positive student interactions. Goal setting, as a fourth component, is significant. Successful people generally establish goals early in life. Parents and teachers should engage in dialogues to help youngsters set long-term goals. Racial pride is a very important component for African American students to achieve academic success. Gary and Booker emphasized the need for African American students to understand their rich history. In addition, teachers must foster the academic self-confidence of their students, making it clear that they can achieve academically, not just athletically. Cultural utilization is a component that should be integrated for academic achievement. Changes in the method of pedagogy would foster higher academic achievement among African Americans. The instructional style should be congruent with their cognitive styles, building on the attributes and skills the children bring with them from the home environment. The ideal classroom would include lively and varied activities. Therefore, the culture should be utilized in the classroom. Another component, mentoring programs, is also important. Where programs offering mentoring relationships to students do not exist, they should be established. Gary and Booker asserted that offering individualized attention, a mentor can help a young person to develop self-confidence and assertiveness. Another component of the model, academic motivation, is used to foster academic achievement. Youngsters should be exposed to a variety of potential career areas. An early idea of what is possible in terms of both academic achievement and social mobility aids in shaping the socialization of students. Finally, even high achievers need academic stamina to keep going-an inner motivation to succeed. Some of this motivation, maintained Gary and Booker, comes from studying biographies of African Americans and recognizing that smooth roads to achievement are rare. Also, a faith in self, family, friends, and community can empower a young African American to achieve academically. In summary, Gary and Booker's model supports the significance of the variables, parental involvement, religious socialization, and self-concept. It further suggests that the components, academic motivation and academic stamina, impact the variable, academic achievement. Lastly, the components regarding peer pressure, racial pride, culture utilization, mentor programs, and goal setting can enhance students' self-concept.

The Comer Model

The Comer model (1980) was implemented in the New Haven, Connecticut, public schools in 1968. This model is also known as the School Development Program (SDP). The SDP established a long-term collaboration among a private university and child study center, a public

school system, and a community of teachers and parents--a collaboration initiated to benefit all children in the school system. The Comer model is a process model in which methods, technologies, equipment, and materials are not as important as identifying problems and opportunities. It is composed of several components (see Figure 2). The School Planning and Management Team establishes policy and guidelines. It emphasizes the social skills and issues young people need in order to function in today's complex society. The second component, the Mental Health Team, responds to referrals from classroom teachers regarding student needs. Further, it aids in creating a climate in which a solid educational program could emerge. The key element of the model is the Parent Participation Program. It involves three levels of parent participation. Level 1 is concerned with structuring broad-based activities for a large number of parents and students. It builds a cultural bridge into the community, which incorporates home, school, and church activities. Level 2 is composed of approximately one parent per professional staff member who works in the school as a classroom assistant, tutor, or aide. Parents receive a stipend or work as volunteers. Level 3, the most sophisticated level of the parent program, involves the participation of parents in school governance. This intervention model encourages parent-staff collaboration; thus, parents participate in the regular governing body of the school rather than a separate parent advisory group. The intervention staff, principal, and parent coordinator provide training in participatory skills. The last component in the model is the Curriculum and Staff Development program. This component provides teachers with support and enhances the quality of education for students. Curriculum planning integrates a mental health approach into curriculum activities. Consultants are provided to teachers to give skill development. Basic and social skill instruction are provided to help teachers with learning-disabled students. An intervention staff meets regularly to prepare programs for high risk students based on various results of diagnostic test. The effectiveness of the Comer model has been evaluated and documented and adopted by other school systems across the country. It is now in its second decade and contradicts research literature indicating most poor minority students are destined for low academic achievement. Instead, findings from the Comer model indicated that by adopting management and teaching methods consistent with current social conditions and concurrent needs of a particular school, social performance and learning can be significantly improved among low-income minority group students. The school development program model seeks to build parental involvement and to empower the community through a variety of social intervention strategies.

A Proposed Achievement Model

This study considered a model that synthesizes factors from Comer, Irvine, and Gary and Booker. In addition, the model emphasizes the importance of religious socialization in the African American community and uses non-school factors that impact academic achievement. Specifically, parental involvement, religious socialization and the Black Church, self-concept, socioeconomic status, and gender were examined as predictors of reading and mathematics achievement.

Parental Involvement. For minorities in general, the primary vehicle to middle-class status is through education. Historically, minorities succeeded in school because their parents valued and strongly supported education (Berube, 1983; Edmonds, 1979). Many Black parents recognize that one of the ways out of poverty is through education; consequently, they have more emotional involvement in their schools because "schools have been concrete representations of black people's hopes and dreams" (Irvine, 1991, p. 106). Comer (1989) emphasized the importance of parental involvement in particular for disadvantaged and minority children. Black parents overwhelmingly support high standards, tough courses, and more homework for their children (Honig, 1987). They realize the ability to compete in school and, later, in the job market is their children's best chance for achieving success. The extent of and degree to which parents become active in their children's

school is strongly influenced by a number of factors (Freiber, 1993; Garmezy, 1991; Swap, 1990; Winters, 1993). For example, many inner-city parents are not able to support school programs offered in the evenings or on weekends. These parents may work more than one job, evenings, or weekend shifts. If dropout rates continue to increase, as they have during the past 30 years, the level of effort required to involve inner-city parents in educational efforts will become an even greater challenge.

Religious Socialization and The Black Church. The Black Church is defined as those churches that historically began without support from their white counterparts. The Black Church is regarded as the strongest institution within the Black community, and it is one of the most studied socio-cultural institutions in American culture. The Black Church provides social, political, and educational leadership among its members and is recognized as an institution of strength and influence within the Black community. In addition to being a citadel of faith in the community, the Black Church is also an economic entity, a political power base, an employment component, a cultural vehicle, and a leadership reservoir. Education has been one of the primary concerns of the Black Church, and virtually every account by historians identify the Church as the platform that established education and socialization for Blacks (Berry & Asamen, 1989; Carter, Walker, & Jones, 1991; Frazier, 1974; Johnson, 1990; Lincoln & Mamiya ,1990; Weissman, 1991). In describing the multiple functions of the Black Church, Mays and Nicholson (as cited in Billingsley, 1992) reported that regardless of its problems and failures, the Black Church has a certain genius of soul that gives it life and vitality and makes it stand out significantly above its buildings, creeds, rituals, and doctrines. These factors make it a unique institution.

The Black Church is the main impetus for religious socialization, and the extent to which individuals are involved in a church or religious belief system, a socializing influence is exerted on them. For young children and teenagers, moral development is clearly the socialization intent of church programs. Sunday school classes and youth religious groups attempt to inculcate positive social values and habits. The fellowship offered within church-sponsored young adult groups influences the development of social skills and the affirmation of self and group identity. The church may provide social contexts in which individuals find opportunity for participation and self-development (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). The process of interacting with others as well as exposure to religious scriptures, rituals, and fellowship activities, and behaviors may in turn influence individuals in "various secular endeavors" (Brown & Gary, 1991, p. 413). For example, members of the church choir may find fulfillment and heightened self-esteem. This positive self-image and socialization is likely to extend beyond the Church .

Self Concept. Individuals hold a set of ideas about themselves — what they can and cannot do, how they look and feel, how they compare to others. This collective set of ideas is called the self-concept, and it affects the individual's behavior, choices, and relationships (Bee, 1995; Damon & Hart, 1982). Research on academic self-concept has indicated that individuals who think well of themselves are more motivated to succeed academically. In an extensive review of the literature, Graham (1994) concluded that African Americans are equal to or higher than European Americans on an array of self-concept measures. These data become more significant when viewed in relation to reported measures of actual achievement or academic ability. When judged by their reported educational and vocational aspirations, there is no indication that African Americans do not value achievement. Ford (1992) proposed that African American students' perceptions of how well they fit socially, psychologically, and culturally are linked directly to their academic achievement. Further, the level of support these students hold for the achievement ideology plays an important role in their academic behaviors. This suggests that self-concept, in particular the aspect focusing on how the individual perceives his or her own academic ability, is a major factor in academic achievement. Even in the face of achievement failure, African American students maintained

"undaunted optimism and positive self-regard" (Graham, 1994, p. 103). It may be that African American students have unrealistic expectations about the process of achieving academically, rather than low self-concept. This notion may contradict the commonly held belief that it is low self-concept that affects African Americans academically.

Socioeconomic Status. African Americans are over-represented among economically disadvantaged groups in the United States, and researchers who make comparisons between African American students and other groups need to incorporate socioeconomic status into their research designs in order to separate race and social class effects (Graham, 1994). Current research has placed more emphasis on the disadvantaged or lower socioeconomic level African American child. Economically deprived parents generally have few resources to provide an educational home environment that includes books, reference materials, and study space (Rhodes, 1992). Children who live in such "pedagogically poor surroundings" can appear to be less intelligent than they actually are (Kylen, as cited in Rhodes, 1992, p. 109). Furthermore, African American children may appear to be low achievers because measurement instruments used in determining intelligence and academic achievement are based on middle-class, mainstream values and language rather than on cognitive or intellectual functioning. In reality, these "underachievers" may be potential gifted children (Rhodes, 1992).

Gender Identity. An important part of gender identity is the ideal of role models. Gender identity and role modeling are particularly relevant for at-risk African American students because many are from single-parent homes. If a boy has no father, he will need to find a positive role model in a grandfather, uncle, neighbor, teacher, or church member. The same holds true for girls. Unfortunately, young, urban, economically disadvantaged children are often raised in families and in a society in which positive role models are few, distant, or not approachable (Wright & Borland, 1992).

Research Questions

In an attempt to assess the impact of the five predictor variables generated from the literature review, the following three research questions guided this investigation:

1. What is the initial level on the criterion variables (mathematics and reading achievement) and the predictor variables (parental involvement, religious socialization, self-concept, socioeconomic status, and gender) for African American students?

2. What is the relationship between each individual variable and mathematics and reading achievement?

3. Do the predictor variables account for differences in mathematics and reading achievement?

Method

Sample. Data for the present study were drawn from the National Educational Longitudinal Study, 1988: First Followup 1990 (U.S. Department of Education, 1992). The NELS study is stored on four separate magnetic disk file tapes, and the tapes are available for use by the public. These public-use tapes were accessed and used for this study. The 1,868 African American students who participated in the NELS First Follow-up were the focus of this study. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine if a relationship existed between the five predictor variables and mathematics and reading achievement.

Measurement of Variables. Five variables were used as possible predictors of mathematics and reading achievement. To measure parental involvement, religious socialization, and self concept, scores on sets of related questions were summed and an average was taken. Socioeconomic status was reported as quartiles. The first quartile was considered low SES, the second and third quartiles were identified as average SES, and the fourth quartile as high SES. Gender, a dichotomous variable, was dummy coded for use in the multiple regression analysis.

Data Analysis. Measures of central tendency and variability and correlation coefficients were generated. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine if a relationship existed between the five predictor and mathematics and reading achievement. The following statistical assumptions were examined: (a) cases-to-variables ration, (b) multicollinearity, (c) outliers, and (d) normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals, and it was determined that the assumptions were met.

Results

Frequency counts and percentages for the predictor variables gender and socioeconomic status are presented in Table 1. The participants were nearly equally divided between males and females (49.6% males and 50.4% females). The socioeconomic status results indicate 38.3% of the participants were in the first quartile, 26% were in the 2nd quartile, 18% were in the 3rd quartile, and 12.7% of the respondents were in the fourth quartile. Socioeconomic information was missing for 5% of the respondents.

Mean, minimum, maximum, range, and standard deviation scores were computed for the predictor variables parental involvement, religious socialization, self-concept, and the criterion variables mathematics and reading achievement (see Table 2). The participants reported a moderate level of religious socialization. The mean score was 2.71 along a scale of 4.0 with 4.0 being the maximum. The standard deviation was .88 indicating a somewhat high amount of variability. The minimum score was 0.5. The respondents reported a moderate level of parental involvement. The mean was 2.68 along a scale of 4.0 with 4.0 being the maximum. The standard deviation was 0.59 indicating a moderate amount of variability. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was .76 indicating a fairly high amount of internal consistency between items that measure parental involvement. Participants reported high self-concept with little variability in this construct, with a standard deviation of .44. The mean score was 3.19. The maximum score was 4.0. The minimum score was 1.14. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was .74 indicating a fairly high amount of internal consistency between items that measure self-concept.

A correlation matrix was generated for the predictor variables religious socialization, self-concept, socioeconomic status, gender, and the criterion variables, mathematics and reading achievement (see Table 3). Thirteen of the bivariate correlations were statistically significant, yet few of the correlations had substantive values. For instance, there was a moderate relationship between mathematics and reading achievement and socioeconomic status. There also was a slightly moderate correlation between mathematics and reading achievement and parental involvement. The review of literature suggested that the predictor should have had a much stronger correlation with achievement. The magnitude of statistical significance is an important issue. Thompson (1988) noted the limited contribution that statistical testing may make to the interpretation of results. Incomplete understanding of significance testing has led to serious distortions in result interpretations. One such distortion occurs when sample sizes are large and statistically significant, or correlations are modest and over-interpreted.

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A total of five predictor variables were examined in the mathematics and reading models. Table 4 contains the full regression model regressing the variables on mathematics achievement. In mathematics achievement, 15.99% of the variance is accounted for by the predictor variables. The standardized regression coefficients for socioeconomic status, self-concept, and parental involvement were found to be statistically significant ($p < .05$). Socioeconomic status (b = .35062436) had the highest beta weight and contributed the most to R^2. Self-concept (b = .17109930) values were the next highest contributor. For the variable parental involvement, the value (b = -.04306394) had a low value indicating that respondents with less parental involvement had higher mathematics achievement; however, the magnitude of the regression coefficient was too small to be interpreted. Religious socialization and gender were not statistically significant.

Table 5 contains the full regression model regressing the variables on reading achievement. In reading achievement, 17.43% of the variance is accounted for by the predictor variables. The standardized regression coefficients of all five variables were identified as being statistically significant ($p < .05$). Gender (b = .11831102) was found to be statistically significant although the value is relatively low and therefore not substantive. Socioeconomic status had the highest beta weight (b = .35178773) and contributed the most to R^2. Religious socialization (b = .04336201) was found to be statistically significant, but the value was not large enough to interpret meaningfully. Self-concept (b = .17208527) values were the next highest contributor. These results indicated that students with high socioeconomic status and high self-concept had the highest reading achievement. For the variable parental involvement, the value (b =-.05009947) indicated that respondents with less parental involvement had higher reading achievement; however, the magnitude of the regression coefficient is really too small to be interpreted.

Discussion

For the predictor variable socioeconomic status, approximately 70% of the students were classified in the first and second lowest quartiles on the socioeconomic status scale. These findings support the United States Census that a large proportion of African Americans live in economically disadvantaged circumstances. In this study, nearly two thirds of the students lived in the South, a geographic region that generally has a lower socioeconomic status than some other areas of the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992). The students in the NELS appeared to be typical of many African American students in that low socioeconomic status was associated with low achievement. More specifically, socioeconomic status was the most consistent predictor for mathematics and reading achievement in this study.

The predictor variable self-concept was positively related to achievement. The African American students in this study had a relatively high self-concept. This supports the literature that states that even though many African American students may experience academic failure, they still have positive self-regard and optimism (Graham, 1994). This may be problematic for two reasons. First, student's feelings of optimism that they can achieve something or meet a goal is not the same thing as actually doing it. Some students may have been told they can accomplish anything if they try, but their perception of what is entailed in the process of achieving long-term goals (e.g., motivation, discipline, and perseverance) is not rooted in reality. Second, with this false sense of easily accomplishing tasks, some students seek instant gratification rather than seriously applying themselves to reaching long-term academic goals; hence, the outcome may result in high self-concept and low achievement.

The predictor variable religious socialization was not found statistically significant for mathematics and reading achievement. This finding was not expected because the literature

suggests that religious socialization should be a predictor for achievement (Brown & Gary, 1991). The NELS questions used to measure religious socialization focused on whether the respondents considered themselves to be religious persons and how often they attended religious services. Perhaps this finding reflects the way in which the variable was measured. For example, in the religious socialization study by Brown and Gary, different questions were used to assess educational attainment. Assessment of religious socialization was measured by underlying constructs rather than frequency of church attendance.

Although parental involvement was found to be negatively related to mathematics and reading achievement, this result should be interpreted with caution since the magnitude of the relationship was so small. Perhaps this finding occurred because only a portion of questions from the NELS survey were used to measure this variable. In Comer's model, parental involvement serves as a primary component because the need for parental involvement is greatest in low-income and minority communities where many parents often feel a sense of exclusion and isolation. Many African American parents feel inadequate when interacting within the school setting.

One implication from the results is whether or not the NELS questionnaire is a suitable data source for African American students. The demographic characteristics of the students who participated in the NELS may not be representative of at-risk African American youth. The literature suggest the majority of at risk students are from poor urban areas. However, the NELS indicated that nearly half of the participants were from suburban areas. The concern then becomes, are the definitions for urban and suburban regions used to identify students in the NELS consistent with the urban and suburban regions suggested by the literature used in this study. Further, how many African American students in the NELS sample are truly from poor urban communities and how does this impact achievement? Another concern is the fact that the NELS oversampled in the South region to get a large number of African American student responses. Perhaps further research could examine a more representative sample of African American students and determine a more comparative definition of urban and suburban areas in order to obtain a more precise assessment of achievement for poor urban students.

The results of this study suggests that a different research design may be more suitable for examining variables pertaining to African American students and academic achievement. Rather than using a large database, a smaller and more accessible sample could be used. A smaller, local sample may afford the opportunity to achieve a more accurate measure of the variables of interests. Instead of a self-reported questionnaire, interviews, and observations might measure the variables more accurately.

The literature suggests that achievement is too frequently measured by standardized tests scores (Darling-Hammond, 1990). In this study, standardized mathematics and reading scores were used to measure achievement. In subsequent studies, a variety of measurement tools could be identified and implemented to measure academic performance (e.g., classroom participation, teachers' observations, written work and portfolios, regular test scores, and GPA). It is also recommended that a more in-depth examination within the African American community be conducted to further investigate the significance of religious socialization and the Black Church, an important institution within this community.

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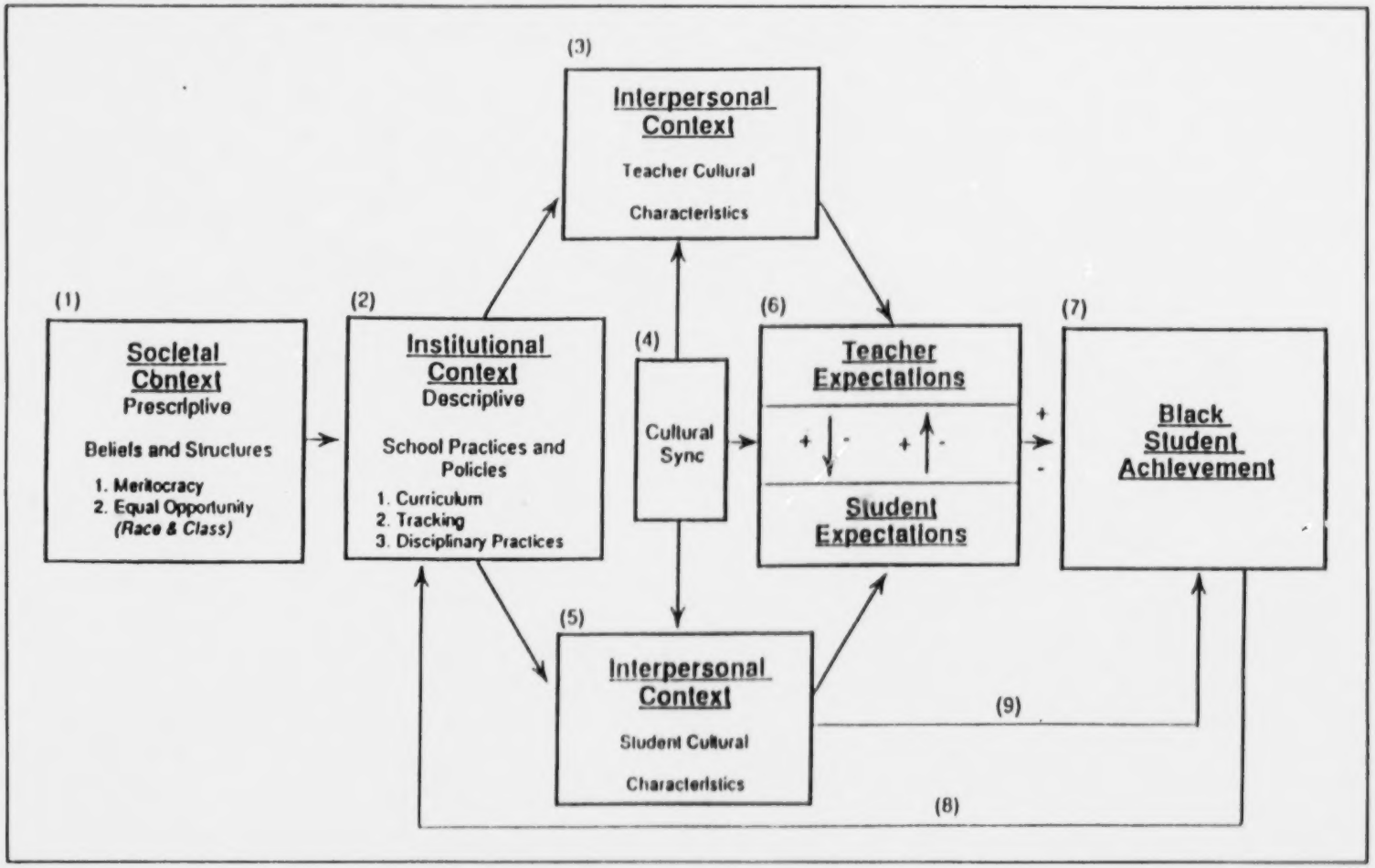

Figure 1. A process model for Black student achievement.

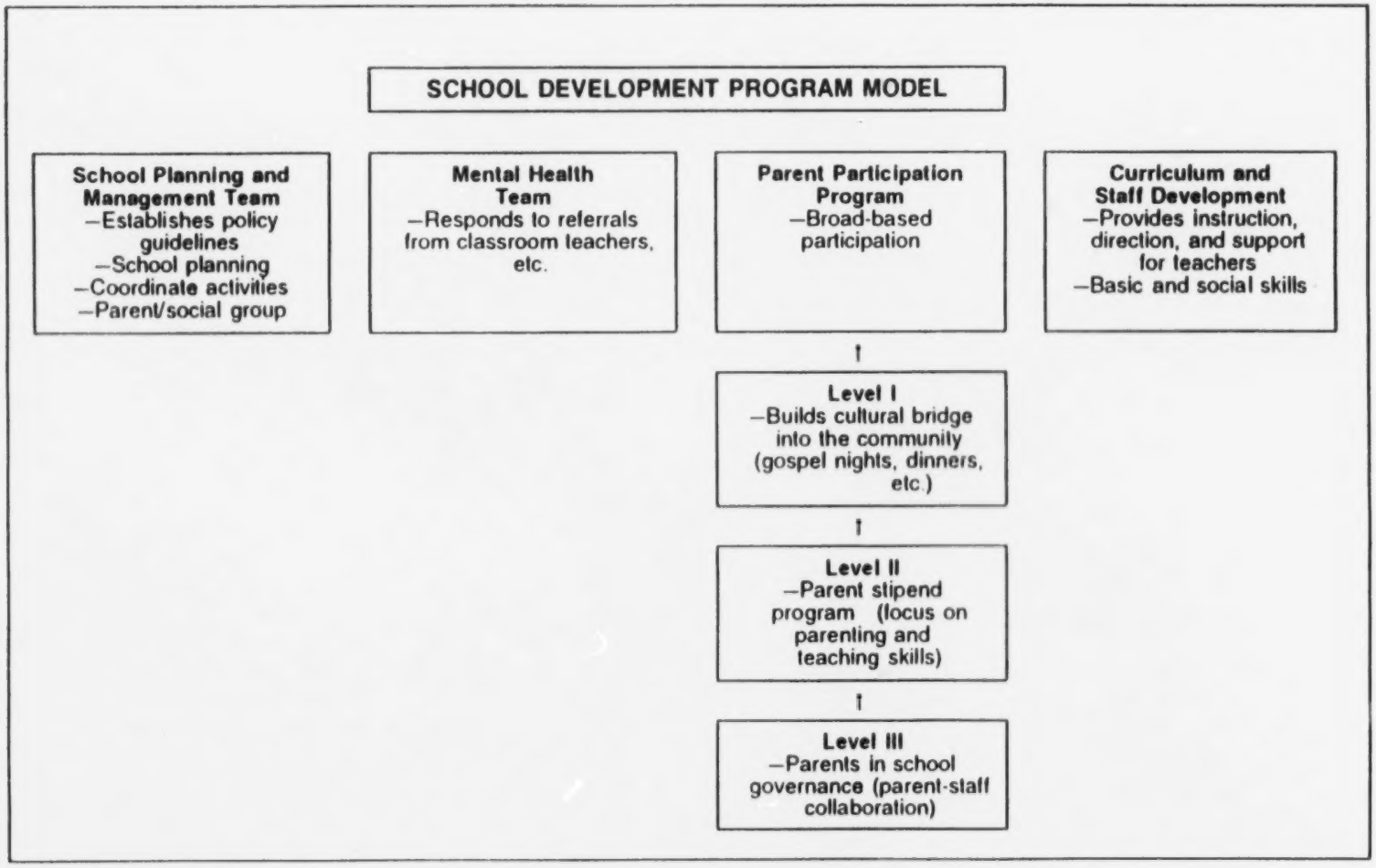
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MODEL
School Planning and Management Team
–Establishes policy guidelines
–School planning
–Coordinate activities
–Parent/social group
Mental Health Team
–Responds to referrals from classroom teachers, etc.
Parent Participation Program
–Broad-based participation
Curriculum and Staff Development
–Provides instruction, direction, and support for teachers
–Basic and social skills
Level I
–Builds cultural bridge into the community (gospel nights, dinners, etc.)
Level II
–Parent stipend program (focus on parenting and teaching skills)
Level III
–Parents in school governance (parent-staff collaboration)

Figure 2. A proposed model suggesting Comer's school development program model.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages for Gender and Socioeconomic Status

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Male	926	49.6
Female	942	50.4
Socioeconomic status		
1st quartile	716	38.3
2nd quartile	486	26.0
3rd quartile	336	18.0
4th quartile	238	12.7
Missing	92	5.0

Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviation, Maximum, Minimum, and Range Scores for Predictor Variables and Achievement

Variable	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Standard deviation
Religious socialization	2.71	0.50	4.00	3.50	0.88
Parental involvement	2.68	1.00	4.00	3.00	0.59
Self-concept	3.19	1.14	4.00	2.86	0.44
Mathematics	28.74	11.08	57.95	46.87	10.63
Reading	17.68	7.38	34.93	27.55	6.98

Table 3

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients of the Predictor Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Gender						
2. Socioeconomic status	-0.02					
3. Religious socialization	0.083*	0.078*				
4. Self-concept	-0.05	0.055*	0.02			
5. Parental involvement	0.02	0.101*	0.171*	0.080*		
6. Mathematics	0.02	0.353*	0.057*	0.188*	0.01	
7. Reading	0.111*	0.357*	0.08	0.184*	0.01	0.728*

Note. *$p < .05$.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Model of Mathematics

Predictor variable	Standardized regression coefficient (b)	Probability (p)
Gender	0.03222170	0.1313
Socioeconomic status	0.35062436	0.0001 *
Religious socialization	0.03075567	0.1561
Self-concept	0.17109930	0.0001 *
Parental involvement	-0.04306394	0.0474 *

Note. R^2 = 0.1599; df = 5/1862; F = 70.887; p < 0.0001.

Table 5

Multiple Regression Model of Reading

Predictor variable	Standardized regression coefficient (b)	Probability (p)
Gender	0.11831102	0.0001 *
Socioeconomic status	0.35178773	0.0001 *
Religious socialization	0.04336201	0.0438 *
Self-concept	0.17208527	0.0001 *
Parental involvement	-0.05009947	0.0200 *

Note. R = 0.1743; df = 5/1862; F = 78.603; p < 0.0001.